



“ I’ve never seen anyone play guitar quite the way Marian McLaughlin does, or sing the patterns she sings.” - Bob Boilen, NPR Music’s All Songs Considered

Marian McLaughlin is a songwriter, singer, and guitarist pushing the boundaries of folk music. Weaving together imaginative lyrics, intricate classical guitar work, and rhapsodic delivery she creates songs of exquisite detail that are delicate, yet full of depth.

McLaughlin’s adventurous approach to music was inspired in part by Situationist Guy Debord’s theory of “*dérive*,” where one sets off on an unplanned route, letting their surroundings subconsciously direct the journey, “with the ultimate goal of encountering an entirely new and authentic experience.” She applies this practice to her songwriting, letting instrument or idea guide her. During an interview with NPR Music, McLaughlin explained how she sees parallels in her songwriting to *dérives*. She primarily writes in an intuitive manner and taps into her stream-of-consciousness when constructing lyrics. Noting that there’s a vast amount of direction and space when it comes to playing the guitar, McLaughlin takes delight in exploring and discovering ideas. The results are often composed and cohesive, yet full of unexpected arrangements and shifting movement.

McLaughlin familiarized herself with guitar after enrolling in a guitar class at her high school. Her instructor as well as fellow students provided a warm, welcoming environment that encouraged musical exploration and experimentation. While studying art and music at George Mason University, McLaughlin attended guitar master classes led by Larry Snitzler, a pupil and friend of legendary classical guitarist Andrés Segovia. Here, she picked up more technique while developing her own approach to the guitar.

Since then, McLaughlin has played live all around the DC area in prominent venues as well as intimate house shows. She has opened up artists such as Marissa Nadler, Cate Le Bon, San Fermin, Ryley Walker, Daniel Bachman, Arborea, Hundred Waters and Six Organs of Admittance. McLaughlin is an active figure in DC and Baltimore’s growing music community, hosting, curating, as well as performing in unique events. She is also an Artist in Residence at Strathmore in Bethesda, Maryland. In 2014, she released her first studio album *Dérive* and collaborated that summer with

filmmaker Zambia to create a video for her song “Before You Leave”, which was featured on NPR Music’s blog All Songs Considered. She frequently collaborates with multi-instrumentalist and composer Ethan Foote, who wrote string arrangements for some of her songs, which were featured in an NPR Music Tiny Desk Concert.

This summer, she plans to release her second studio album, *Spirit House*, which will be a continuation of her musical partnership with Foote. Their work together represents an adventurous and original endeavor in the meeting of experimental folk-rock, chamber music, and lyrical vision. Using her classical guitar work and lyrics as a foundation to a song, Foote adds a new dimension, conceiving instrumentation, texture, color, and other possibilities of sound. The arrangements on this album will feature a string quartet, a woodwinds player, a percussionist, and a trombone and trumpet player.

Portfolio

["Before You Leave"](#) // music video featured on NPR Music

[NPR Music Tiny Desk Concert](#) // featuring string arrangements by Ethan Foote

[Folkadelphia Session](#) // studio performance for folk radio program featured on WXPB

[Out of Town Films](#) // live video takeaway session

[ATV Beats Session](#) // acoustic session with American University student film collective

[Bandcamp](#) // stream *Dérive*

Press Clippings

[“There is plenty to savor here off in McLaughlin’s corner of the world, which she peoples with odd, vivid images and gorgeously recorded gestures.”](#) - Jayson Greene, Wondering Sound

[“Dérive - her 2014 independently-released LP - is a progressively composed suite that often veers into baroque and avant territory without losing its natural edge.”](#) - Peter Lillis, Frontier Psychiatrist

[“Like Tolstoy with a melody.”](#) - Dean Essner, City Paper

[“She has her creative spark drawing the ether from such vast time periods from the ancient psyche folk days of Vashti Bunyan and Mary-Anne \(Patterson\) to the modern renaissance.”](#) - David Hintz, D.C. Rock Live

Interviews

[D.C. Music Download](#)

[The Vinyl District: First Date](#)

[Brooklyn Based](#)

[DCist](#)

[Chunky Glasses Podcast](#)